

APPENDIX K

CDSS OVERVIEW OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

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Tuesday, December 12, 2006

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Eligibility and Issuance Requirements

For Households to receive Food Stamp Benefits they must meet certain eligibility requirements in the following areas:

- [Citizenship/Immigration Status](#)
- [Income](#)
- [Reporting Changes](#)
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- [Work Requirements](#)
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If you think you may be eligible for food stamp benefits, download an application form, fill it out, and submit it to your local County Welfare Department.

Citizenship/Immigration Status

Certain non-citizens such as those admitted for humanitarian reasons and those admitted for permanent residence are eligible for food stamps. Eligible household members can get food stamp benefits even if other members of the household are not eligible.

Food stamp eligibility is available to most legal immigrants who:

- Have lived in the country for five (5) years, or
- Are receiving disability-related assistance or benefits, regardless of entry date, or
- Are children under 18 years of age regardless of entry date.

Non-citizens who are in the U.S. temporarily, such as students, are not eligible.

A number of States have their own programs to provide benefits to immigrants who do not meet the regular Food Stamp Program eligibility requirements. California's program is the California Food Assistance Program.

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Income

All food stamp households, except those containing an aged or disabled member, are subject to both the gross and net income determination test. Categorically eligible (CE) households are subject only to the net income test.

Gross Income - all non-excludable income from any source including all earned income and all unearned income. The maximum income allowed is 130% of the Federal poverty level (FPL) or 165% of the FPL if the household has an elderly or disabled person who qualifies to

be a separate household. If the household passes the gross income test, then the net income test is computed.

- Earned income has an allowable deduction of 20% (i.e., 80% of the gross earned income counts in the calculation of benefit levels). Examples of earned income include wages and salaries, striker's benefits, etc.
- Unearned income has no allowable income deduction. Unearned income counts dollar for dollar in the calculation of benefits. Examples of unearned income include California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) cash aid, General Assistance/General Relief (GA/GR) cash grant, child support payments paid directly to the household, etc.

Income Deductions - Deductions used to determine the food stamp household's net income eligibility and benefit level.

- **Standard Deduction** - A deduction allowed per household per month. \$134 for households of 1 - 4 persons, \$153 for 5 persons, and \$175 for 6 or more persons (effective 10/1/04).
- **Excess Shelter** - A monthly shelter cost in excess of 50% of the household's income after deductions. The excess shelter deduction must not exceed the current maximum of \$388 (effective 10/1/04).
- **Homeless Household Shelter** - Available to homeless persons who are not receiving free shelter for the entire month. If the homeless shelter allowance is used, separate utility costs are not allowed because the homeless shelter allowance includes a utility component. The current allowance is \$143.
- **Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)** - Allowed for a household that incurs utility costs, which are separate and apart from the household's rent/mortgage payment. The current allowance is \$210 (effective 10/1/04).
- **Dependent Care** - The actual cost, not exceeding the maximum dependent care deduction, for care of a child or other dependent. Up to \$200 per month for the cost of dependent care for a child, under 2 years of age and up to \$175 per month for each other dependent can be deducted.
- **Medical Deduction** - The portion of medical expenses, excluding special diets, in excess of the allowable amount of \$35 per household per month (incurred by any household member who is elderly or disabled).
- **Earned Income Deduction** - 20% of gross earned income, not counting any excludable income or unearned income.

Exempt Income

- **In-Kind Benefits** - Any gain or benefit that is not in the form of money (i.e., meals, clothing, housing provided by the employer, etc.)
- **Vendor Payments** - Money paid to a third party for a household expense by a person or organization outside of the household.
- **Deferred Educational Loans**
- **Grants and Scholarships**
- **Cash donations** from a charitable organization of not more than \$300 in a calendar quarter
- **Income received too infrequently/irregularly** to be reasonably anticipated but not more than \$30 in a quarter.

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Reporting Changes

Food Stamp recipients must notify their local County Welfare Department about changes in their income or other circumstances. Such changes may affect their eligibility for benefits. There are two kinds of reporting: Change and Quarterly, which are described below:

Change Reporting

Change reporting households are those in which household members are seasonal and/or migrant farm workers, elderly, disabled or homeless.

- These households are required to report within 10 days from the date of the change in writing, verbally or in person.
- Changes required to be reported are:
 - the source and amount of gross income of more than \$25, addition or loss of a household member, address changes and shelter costs, when cash on hand, stocks, bonds, money in a bank account or savings reach a total of \$2,000 (\$3,000 for elderly and disabled households), a change in child support payments made to a non household member.

Quarterly Reporting

Quarterly Reporting (QR) households are required to report every 3 months on the QR 7 form.

- The form asks the household to report income, medical and child care expenses and any change that the household is expecting to change in the next 3 months (next QR quarter).
- In-between reporting changes on the QR 7, during the quarter, the QR households are required to report changes of address.
- Households *may* report, during the quarter, any change that could increase benefits; such as, a job loss or increased shelter expenses.
- Benefits cannot be decreased mid-quarter unless: the county has to impose a sanction/financial penalty, an individual is approved for benefits in another household or, incorrect information has been reported by the household.

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Resources

A resource is something the household can draw upon or sell for financial assistance. Resource limits are \$2,000 for all households except those that have a member who has a disability or who is 60 years of age or older. These households can have up to \$3,000 in resources. Any countable resource will be added to the household's resource limit when making an eligibility determination.

Types of Resources

- Liquid Resources - Includes all funds readily available to the household such as cash on hand, money in checking or savings accounts, savings certificates, trust deeds, notes receivable, stocks, or bonds, non-recurring lump sum payments (which includes retroactive payments, funds held in an individual retirement accounts (IRA) and funds held in accessible Keogh plans).
- Non-Liquid Resources - Includes personal property, buildings, land, recreational properties, and any other property. The value of non-exempt resources shall be its equity value, which is the fair market value less encumbrances.
- Excluded Resources - Resources which are excluded are the home and surrounding property, household goods, personal effects, resources with an equity value of \$1500 or less (excluding financial instruments), and resources with a cash value that is not accessible to the household (such as irrevocable trust funds, security deposits on rental property, etc.)

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Work Requirements

All able-bodied persons (ages 18-49) without dependents must work 20 hours per week (monthly average 80 hours) or participate 20 hours per week in an approved work activity or do workfare, or else get only 3 months of Food Stamps out of a 36-month period. There are some exceptions so contact your local County Welfare Department to find out if you are eligible.

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Fingerprint Imaging

All applicants for and recipients of aid under the Food Stamp Program, other than dependent children and persons physically unable to provide the necessary images, will be required to provide two fingerprint images and a photo image as a condition of issuance. This includes:

- Each adult household member who is eligible for Food Stamps, shall fulfill SFIS requirements prior to the issuance of Food Stamp benefits to that household;
- The fingerprint images of the head of household parent and/or caretaker relative of an aided or applicant child when living in the home of the child; and
- If a household member is under the age of 18 and applies for Food Stamps as a separate household, that household member will be required to comply with SFIS requirements.

Expedited service must be issued to a household even if it is not possible to complete the SFIS process in time. However, SFIS compliance should occur prior to the issuance of the household's next allotment.

Exemptions

- If a household member has a medically verified permanent physical condition that would make him/her unable to comply with SFIS requirements.
- Counties will determine who is physically unable to comply with the SFIS requirements. Counties will have to reevaluate individuals with a temporary exemption within sixty days.
- A household member under the age of 18 is exempt, unless he/she is applying for Food Stamps as his/her own household.
- The County Welfare Department (CWD) shall decide when a household member will receive a postponement from the SFIS process. However, the CWD cannot require a household to make a special trip into the office specifically for the fingerprint imaging process.
- Authorized representatives are not required to comply with SFIS requirements, unless no one in the household, which they represent, is required or able to comply with SFIS requirements.
- A household member is allowed to receive temporary benefits when he/she is unable to complete the fingerprint imaging process due to a SFIS equipment problem.

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APPENDIX L

CDSS FOOD STAMP PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Frequently Asked Questions

What can food stamp benefits be used to purchase?

Food Stamp benefits can be used to purchase:

- Foods for human consumption.
- Seeds and plants to grow food for household use.

What you cannot purchase with food stamp benefits?

Food Stamp benefits cannot be used to purchase:

- Any non-food item such as pet food; soaps, paper products, and household supplies; grooming items cosmetics.
- Alcoholic beverages or tobacco products.
- Vitamins and medicines.
- Any food that will be eaten in the store.
- Any food marketed to be heated in the store.

Who can receive food stamp benefits?

You may be eligible to receive food stamp benefits, whether or not you work, if you have a low income.

What is the amount of food stamp benefits I will receive?

The amount of food stamp benefits a low-income person or family can receive is based on the U.S. Department Agriculture's (USDA) Thrifty Food Plan. The plan estimates how much it costs to provide a household with nutritious low-cost meals. The estimates are revised every year to keep pace with changes in food prices. The average of food stamp benefits received per household is about \$200 per month.

What is the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP)?

CFAP is a state-funded food stamp program for legal permanent non-citizens residing in the U.S., and determined ineligible for federal food stamp benefits solely due to their immigration status.

Where do I go to apply for food stamp benefits?

There are over 240 food stamp offices in California operated by local county welfare departments. Low-income people may apply for food stamps at any office located in the county where they live. To find information on your county click on the link County Welfare Departments.

If I am receiving SSI/SSP, can I also receive food stamp benefits?

If you are receiving SSI/SSP, you cannot receive food stamp benefits in California. However, your family may be eligible to receive Food Stamp benefits.

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APPENDIX M

**CDSS FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
APPLICATION PROCESS**

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Food Stamp Programs

How to Apply for Food Stamps Benefits

The Application Process:

- You may request an application for food stamps by phone, in person, by fax, or by mail from your county office.
- Applications for food stamp benefits are available online.
- One adult household member or authorized representative must sign the application for food stamp benefits under penalty of perjury.
- Complete as much of your application as you can. Your name, address and signature are necessary on the application to be accepted by the local food stamp office. The application will be accepted on the same day it is turned in, even if there is no interview on that day.
- When your application has been turned in, the county welfare department will setup an interview to go over your application. There is a list of documents you will need to bring to your interview.
- As soon as all necessary information is provided and verified for eligibility, you will be able to receive your food stamps within 30 days of your dated application.
- You may be categorically eligible if you are receiving CalWORKs, General Assistance (GA), or General Relief (GR).
- You may qualify for expedited service and receive your food stamp benefits within three (3) days if you meet the requirements.



Household Member - Food Stamp Households

A Food Stamp household is a group of people who live together, buy food, and prepare meals together and whose members meet the eligibility requirements and are approved for benefits. The amount of food stamp benefits you get will depend on the number of eligible people in your household and on how much monthly income is left after certain expenses (deductions) are subtracted.

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Interview

- A face-to-face interview is required before certifying your household to get food stamp benefits. There are some exceptions to this rule. This is normally conducted in the county welfare office or a mutually agreed upon location. The interview may be held with the head of household, spouse, the authorized representative or any other responsible household family member. A face-to-face interview is required annually.
- An eligibility worker will explain the program rules and help your household complete any parts of the application that have not yet been completed.
- After the interview, the food stamp office will send a notice. If your household does not qualify for food stamp benefits, the notice will explain why. If your household does qualify, the notice will explain how much the food stamp benefit will be for your

household. It will also explain how many months you can receive food stamps (certification period) before re-applying.

- Local food stamp office officials may waive the face-to-face part of the interview requirement if traveling to the county welfare department would be a hardship for your household. The face-to-face feature must be waived if your household is composed only of elderly or disabled members with no earned income.

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Documents to Bring to Interview

At the time of your interview, please bring verification with you of your income and expenses. If you cannot get all the information together by your interview date, still come for the interview because you will have additional time to provide this information. If you need assistance in obtaining this information, please discuss this with your food stamp worker at the time of the interview. The following are examples of what to bring:

- Proof of Identity (driver's license, etc.), alien status.
- Social Security Numbers for all household members.
- If employed, proof of income (wage stubs, earning statements, etc.) for the past 30 days.
- Bank statements for checking accounts, savings accounts, certificates of deposit, credit union accounts, retirement accounts, stocks, bonds, dividends, etc.
- Proof of shelter costs (rent or mortgage payment, lot rent, household, real estate, taxes, utility bills - heat, electricity, water/sewage/garbage, telephone, etc.)

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Verification

The food stamp worker will also ask for proof of certain information that has been reported. The following must be verified prior to certification:

- Identification
- Immigration Status
- Sponsored Noncitizen Information
- Residency
- SSN/Application for all Household Members
- Gross Income
- Disability
- Utility Expenses
- Medical Expenses
- Child Support Obligations and Payments

An exception is for expedited service, only identification is required and other verification can be postponed. Other verification such as shelter costs, dependent care costs, household size, and liquid resources do not require verification unless questionable.

Categorical Eligibility

Households in which all members are authorized or receiving cash aid, such as CalWORKS or GA/GR, are considered categorically eligible. This means the Food Stamp Program accepts eligibility determinations made by the other program for resources, gross and net income limits, sponsored alien information, county residency, and social security number information.

Food Stamp Households containing California Food Assistance (CFAP) recipients are not categorically eligible.

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Expedited Service

Households that qualify for expedited service (ES) go through the same application forms as all other clients, but not all information has to be verified before benefits are issued. Households may qualify for expedited service (ES) if they are experiencing one of the eligibility factors below:

- Less than \$150 in monthly gross income and liquid resources of \$100 or less; or
- Migrant or seasonal farm workers who are destitute; or
- Households that have combined monthly gross income and liquid resources which are less than their monthly rent or mortgage and utilities; or
- Homeless.

Food Stamp Benefits will be made available to the household no later than the third calendar day following the date the application was filed. Applicants are informed of and are automatically considered for expedited service at the time the application is filed.

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Food Stamp Programs

Nutrition Outreach

Food Stamps Help Families:

- Stretch their food budget to buy food for the whole family
- Buy more healthy foods
- Buy more fruits and vegetables year round for their family
- Stay Healthy by eating nutritious foods

Eat at Least 5 Servings of Fruits and Vegetables Every Day:

- They are easy to fix and serve
- There are many choices
- They are the original "fast food"
- They taste great
- They are needed for you and your children to have good health
- Eat more and be active for better health
- For more information, visit the California Nutrition Network.



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Rights and Responsibilities

When you apply for food stamp benefits, you have rights and responsibilities. Your most important right is to be treated fairly without regard to race, color, national origin, political beliefs, religion, gender, age, or disability. If you think you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint by:

- Contacting your county's civil rights coordinator
- Call (916) 654-2107 or 866-741-6241 (toll free)
- Write to:
California Department of Social Services
Civil Rights Bureau, M.S. 15-70
P.O. Box 94243
Sacramento, CA 94244-2430

If you get Food Stamps only, write to:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Consumer Service
P.O. Box 944243
Civil Rights Office
550 Kearny Street
San Francisco, CA 94108-2518

You Have the Right To:

- Receive an application when you ask for it.
- Turn in your application the same day you receive it.
- Receive your food stamp benefits (or be notified that you are not eligible for the program) within 30 days you turn in your application.
- Receive food stamp benefits within three (3) days if you are eligible and have little or no money.
- Have a fair hearing if you disagree with any action taken on your case.

Your Responsibilities Are To:

- Answer all questions completely and honestly when you apply for food stamp benefits. Sign your name and certify, under penalty of perjury, that all your answers are true.
- Provide proof that you are eligible.
- Promptly report changes in household circumstances to the food stamp office.
- Not put your money or possessions in someone else's name in order to be able to get food stamp benefits.
- Not make changes on any food stamp cards or documents.
- Not sell, trade, or give away your food stamp benefits, or any food stamp cards or documents.
- Use food stamp benefits only to buy eligible items.
- Comply with Statewide Fingerprint Imaging Service (SFIS).

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APPENDIX N

USDA ELIGIBILITY SCREENING TOOL

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Food Stamps Pre-Screening Eligibility Tool

Start Tool



This Pre-Screening Tool can be used to determine if you may be eligible to receive Food Stamp benefits. This Pre-Screening Tool is not an application for Food Stamps. An application for Food Stamps must be made at your local Food Stamp Office. [Click here to find the office that serves your area.](#)

Before you begin, you may want to look up the amounts of your earnings, rent or mortgage, utility bills, child support, day care expenses, medical bills (if you are 60 or older, or disable), child support payments or SSI, social security or VA payments.

[How To Use This Tool](#)

[Internet Basics](#)

Browser Requirements:

- Netscape Navigator 4.7 or higher
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher,
- Other compatible browsers that support frames, JavaScript, and cookies.

You may also be eligible to receive other government benefits besides Food Stamps. For a tool that can tell you about those programs, go to the GovBenefits website. It is available [here](#).
[Disclaimers and Privacy Statements.](#)

Visit the USDA Food and Nutrition Service website for general information.
You are visitor number 2903832

Version: 1.3.1

Food Stamp Eligibility Tool Tutorial

Introduction: Welcome

The United States Department of Agriculture's Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) is providing this pre-screening tool to help you find out if you or others might be eligible to receive food stamps. This tool is not an application for food stamps. But the tool can help you make an informed decision as to whether you or others should apply at your local food stamp office. It can also guess how much you will get. But only your local food stamp office can tell you for sure.

If you have questions about how to use this tool, you can continue with this menu by clicking on "Next." If you don't understand a question in the tool, you can click on the question mark next to it for help.

Introduction: Navigation

The pages in the pre-screening tool are organized so you can get help for any question at any time. This format should allow you to use the tool quickly and easily. After you click on the "Start Tool" button, you can begin answering the questions. The setup has a navigation bar at the top right, and a main content area in the middle. The navigation bar provides three help options: Tutorials, Help Systems, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). If you click on one of the options, you can learn more about different parts of the site.

Introduction: Tutorials

If you click on "Tutorials," you will find the options "Internet Basics Tutorial," "Pre-Screening Tutorial" and "Entering Information Tutorial."

If you click on "Internet Basics Tutorial," you will find an explanation of how to use a computer to search the Internet. It explains how to use a mouse and a keyboard. It also shows which buttons to click on to explore web pages.

If you click on "Pre-Screening Tutorial," you will find the pages you are looking at. These pages explain how to use the food stamp pre-screening tool.

If you click on "Entering Information Tutorial," you will learn how to put your answer into each question in the tool.

You may want to look at each of the tutorials before using this pre-screening tool.

Introduction: External Sources - Links

The first page of the tool allows you to click on "USDA, Food and Nutrition Service." Here you can learn more about the government organization that offers food stamps.

You can also learn more about state food stamp programs. At the top of the page, you will find the sentence "Click here to find the office that serves your area." If you click on the word "here," you will find a phone number for food stamp help for each state. Most of these numbers are free of charge.

Screening Tool Setup: Questions

When you begin using the tool, you will answer questions by typing in the

box next to each question. The tool uses your answers to see if you might be eligible for food stamps. The tool will also estimate the amount of benefits you might get. But only your local office can tell you for sure.

You can get more help with this process using the "Internet Basics" tutorial. If you do not understand a question, you can click on the question mark next to the question. You will then see an explanation of what the question is asking you.

Screening Tool Setup Help - Icons

You will find a small blue arrow next to many of the spots where you must answer a question. If you click on this arrow, you will see an explanation of how to fill in your answer.

Some of the questions are optional, and some are required. If a question is required, you will see a small red asterisk (*) next to it. You must answer that question before going to the next question. If you do not answer it and try to go on, the tool will remind you to finish the question. If you click on the asterisk, you will find an explanation for each of these questions.

Help - Screens

Tutorials

Each tutorial is set up like a book. You can read each page and then flip to another one using the "Next" and "Back" buttons at the bottom.

Definitions

At the bottom of some pages of the pre-screening tool, you can click on certain words printed in blue. You will then see a definition of that word. This may help you answer a question you did not understand.

Help - In-depth

You can also use the question mark button for help with each question, and the arrow button for help with your answer.

Answering Questions - Entering Data

When you are finished answering all of the questions on one page of the pre-screening tool, you can move to the next page by clicking on "Continue" at the bottom right corner of the page. After that, you can go back by clicking the "Go Back" button next to the "Continue" button.

Buttons and Page Navigation

You can exit the pre-screening tool at any time by clicking on the "Exit" button at the bottom left corner of the page.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Household Routing

The first page of the tool asks questions that will help the system find the best help for you.

The State / Territory Question

The first question asks for a state or territory. Enter the state or territory of the person who is interested in food stamp information. Some states have their own pre-screening tools for food stamp eligibility. If you say you live in one of those states, the system will automatically direct you to the state's pre-screening tool. Some states have made small changes to their food stamp eligibility rules. So your state tool is more accurate.

Some states have special rules. If this pre-screening tool tells you you're not eligible, you might still be eligible in your state. Maybe your state has special rules that make you eligible. You should always check with your local food stamp office to know for sure.

Example of Definition Window - Help

If you need help with the state or territory question, click on the question mark next to the state question. A list of every state is available.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: State Tools

If the state you chose has a pre-screening tool, this next page will show it to you. If not, you will go on to the next regular screen of this pre-screening tool.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Household - Numbers

On this page you say how many people are in the household. Usually, this is the number of people who live in the home. If some people in the home buy and eat food separately, they don't count as members of the food stamp household unless they are the spouse or a child under age 22.

If a person is renting a room and lives with you, the person is probably not a member of your household. The person is in your household only if he or she eats the same food you do. If you have any questions about who lives in the household, click on the help button next to this question. You can also call the state hotline number.

Similarities to Routing Page

You can answer the questions on this page just like on the last one. Click on the blank to the right of the question, and type in the answer. For the second and third questions, you can say "yes" or "no" by clicking on the white circles next to those words.

If you have any questions about how to give an answer to a question, click on the little blue arrow next to that question.

Complete / Continue

When you are done answering the questions, click on the box that says "continue," and you will go on to the next page.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Household - Members

On this page you give the name and the age of every person in the household. To do this, just click on the white box next to each question and type your answer. Then, for each person, you say whether that person is a U.S. citizen, and also whether that person is disabled.

Household Members Name

The pre-screening tool asks only for the first name of each person. You don't have to use the person's real name. The information you give to the tool is not saved. There is a survey at the end that is saved but it is optional.

Adding / Deleting Rows

The number of rows on the page is the number of people you said were in the household. If you need more rows, click on the little green plus sign at the bottom of the page, next to "Add More Rows." You will then get three more rows.

You must answer every question on the page before you can go to the next page. If a person is not disabled, you do not need to click on the "Yes" box below the "Disabled?" question.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Assets

On this page you say the assets of each person in the household. Some assets are cash or money in a bank. Some might be physical things a household member owns such as rental property. This page works just like the income page. For each person in the household, you say the kind of asset the person has in the column called "Type of Asset." You put the answer in the box to the right of that person's name. Then you say how much money the asset is worth in the "Worth" column.

If you have a lot of assets, this may disqualify you from getting food stamps. But some assets don't count. If your assets do not count, you will still be eligible. So if you have many assets, your results might not be right. If the pre-screening tool says you are not eligible, you should check your local food stamp office to make sure. You might still be eligible.

Some people in the house probably have more than one kind of assets. To put down each kind of asset each person has, click on the green "plus" button next to "Add More Rows," just like before. Then you can put each asset for each person on a separate row, just like in the "income" section.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Assets - Vehicles

On the page called Assets, you say all of the kinds of property each person in the household has. If a person owns a car or truck, it might be a big asset, if it's worth a lot of money.

If no one in the household has a car or truck, you can skip this section.

The amount of assets a household has can determine if the household can receive food stamps. Each state has its own rules on counting the value of cars or trucks. If you use a car or truck while you do your job, it might not count as an asset. But, cars or trucks used to go to and from work are still counted as an asset. A household who thinks it might not be eligible because of the car or truck it owns should consult with the local food stamp office.

On this page you can find out what the state's rules are for cars and trucks. You can also learn how to guess how much the car or truck is worth. That way you can check to see if that car or truck might be worth too much. If it is worth a lot of money, the household might not be eligible for food stamps. However, it is best to ask a local food stamp office worker to help determine the value of the car or truck.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Income - Earned

On this page you give the earned income of each member of the household. Each person has a name, because you entered the name in the last section. If no one in your household has earned income, you may go to the next section. To find out what counts as earned income, click [HERE](#).

Income

For each person's earned income, choose where the earned income comes from in the row called "Type of Earned Income." To do this, click on the box to the right of that person's name in that column. Then say how much income that person gets by clicking and typing in the next column, called "Gross Amount Received." Explain how often the person gets that income in the next column. These answer boxes work just like in the pages before.

More than one income type

Some people in the household might have more than one kind of earned income. For people with more than one job, you need a row for each kind of earned income. To get more rows, click on the small green "plus" button next to "Add More Rows" at the bottom of the page. After that, you can choose which person goes with which row. If a person has more than one kind of income, that person can take up several rows.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Income - Unearned

Similar to Earned Income

This next page is also for income. But this is only income that is unearned, or income that doesn't come from working. This might be money from a

government program like Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). It could also be money from nongovernmental sources like alimony, or child support. If no one in your household has unearned income, you may go to the next sections. To find out what is unearned income click [HERE](#).

This page works just like the one before it. For each person in the household, if that person has unearned income, say where it comes from in the "Type of Unearned Income" box. Then say how much that person gets, and how often

If a person doesn't have any unearned income, you don't have to fill in the row for that person. You can leave it blank.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Expenses - Housing

Most states also have a "standard utility allowance" (SUA) you can deduct instead of your utility cost. The SUA is an estimate of how much a person might pay for utilities each month. In each state it is the same number for every household. But it can change from state to state. Your SUA in your state may be more than what you pay for utilities. If so you can deduct it instead of deducting what you actually pay. This can help you because you can get a bigger deduction this way. This pre-screening tool will check to see whether your state SUA or your actual utilities cost more. Then it will automatically pick the larger one for you so you get a bigger deduction. But when you apply you will need to figure this out yourself. So you need to check with your local office for more information on this option. For a list of state SUA numbers, click [HERE](#).

If you are homeless, you probably don't have any of these costs. But you can still get a "deduction" for shelter. A deduction is an amount of your income that doesn't count because you have to spend it on something other than food. If you are homeless, you can get a deduction for shelter of \$143 per month in many states. This tool will give you that deduction automatically if you say you are homeless.

Once this section is completed, click on "Continue." If you do not understand a question, click on the blue question mark next to it.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Expenses - Dependent Care

Here you say if anyone in the household needs dependent care. Dependent care is money you must spend on a household member so that the person can work or go to school. It might include childcare. It also might pay for the care of a disabled or elderly person.

For each person, say how much money is spent on dependent care in the middle column. Then put how often that money is paid in the right column.

If more rows are needed, add them by clicking on the "plus" button next to "add more rows."

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Expenses - Child Support

Just like for Dependent Care, you say how much money each person spends on child support and how often it is paid. You can add more rows with the "plus" button.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Expenses - Medical

Here you say what medical expenses each person has. Medical expenses often come from many different places such as several different doctors or drug stores. So on this page, say exactly where each cost comes from for each person. You can't just pick from a list. You also say how often each expense is billed for each person. To add more rows, click on the "plus" button.

You might not get this page after the Dependent Care page. If no one in your house is disabled or over 60 years old you will not get the page. You will get the next page instead, the Results page. This is because you can only deduct medical costs for two kinds of people. These are people who are disabled according to food stamp rules, and people who are age 60 or older.

Medical expenses can be a "deduction" for the food stamp program. That means that money you pay for these expenses doesn't count as income or assets. If you pay medical expenses for someone who is older than 60, or gets disability payments, your medical expenses might be a deduction. But only if you get medical bills for more than \$35 per month, for the people in your household who are disabled or over 60. If you pay more than \$35 per month on medical expenses for other household members, that money is not a deduction.

If you have medical insurance, the "premium" you pay to get the insurance is a deduction. But if the insurance covers bills for you, those bills are not a deduction. Only the health insurance premium cost, the amount you pay for the insurance, is the deduction.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Results

On this page you get your results. You find out whether the household might be eligible for food stamps, and also get an estimate of how much the household might get if the person applies and is certified by the local food stamp office worker. The estimate is based on the information you provided.

If you or someone you know decides to apply for food stamps, the local food stamp office must check your information. It will make a decision using state rules.

Please remember that the results you received today are only an ESTIMATE. The results might not be right. You might get more or less food stamps than the estimate shows. If the results say you are NOT eligible for food stamps, you COULD still get them. Every state's rules for food stamps are a little different. Food stamp workers are the only people that can officially determine whether or not a person is eligible for food stamp benefits. To find out if you or others are eligible, complete a food stamp application form and apply at a local food stamp office.

You can also call your local food stamp office, or click [HERE](#) for a list of food stamp phone hotlines. If you click on "click here," on the results page, you will also go to the list of food stamp phone hotlines. Each state has its own hotline. If you call the hotline for your state, you can obtain information on how to get an application form and where to apply. You can also learn more about the application process.

If you click on "click for details," you will see some of the answers you put down.

At the bottom of the screen, you will see other programs you might be eligible for. If you click on the name of one of them, you will go to another page where you can learn more about the program.

You can also print out this page so you can remember what it said. Click on "print this page" and the page will print, if your computer is connected to a printer.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Printable Results

Summary

After the results page, if you click on "continue," you come to a survey. This survey is optional. It is just used to let the FNS learn more about who uses the pre-screening tool. The system does not keep any information and your answers are confidential.

The questions on the survey can be answered one-by-one just like all the questions in the tool itself. When you are done answering them, just click on "Finish."

That's all there is to the pre-screening tool! If there is any other thing you don't understand, you can call the food stamp hotline for your state.

Thank you for using the tool.

Step-By-Step Walk-Thru: Survey

Disclaimers

The survey (optional) is used to create demographic and research statistics for the USDA FNS. This will help them better the system, and the Food Stamps Programs as a whole. It will allow them to see which areas have most interest in Food Stamps as well as the areas that do not and those that need higher attention and funding.

Finishing Screening, Logging Out

By clicking exit at the end of the survey the user will also be signing out of the system, the screening tool, and will be brought back to the Welcome page.